



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Tuesday, August 15, 2006

***NAPOLITANO, ARPAIO CALL FOR CHANGE AT I.C.E.
New Leadership is a Start but There is More to Do***

PHOENIX – The federal Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) bureau in Maricopa County finally has new leadership, after mismanagement and strained relationships with local law enforcement that has gone on for months. Today, Governor Janet Napolitano and Maricopa County Sheriff Joe Arpaio, in a bi-partisan effort, have jointly written to Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff thanking him for the change, but at the same time, pointing out that a great deal of damage has been done.

In the letter, Arpaio and Napolitano indicate that Maricopa County has become a national transit hub for human smuggling rings, and that ICE has been resistant to efforts to cooperate:

“The previous Maricopa County ICE SAC [Special Agent in Charge] was reluctant to share even basic information regarding apprehensions, border crossing deaths, drug confiscation statistics, or the number of agents and man hours available to combat the problem. He categorically refused to provide us with this information. His hostility to state and local law enforcement, coupled with a “we know better than you” attitude, was counter to the mission of his agency and did serious damage to relations between our State and your Department. We are greatly relieved and encouraged that he is being replaced.”

ICE cooperation has been so lacking that the agency even has refused to pick up and deport undocumented immigrants who have been convicted under Arizona’s human smuggling statute. Instead, Maricopa County Sheriff’s deputies must drive the arrestees to the border to be turned over to Border Patrol – a significant waste of time and taxpayer dollars.

The letter continues:

“We hope that the new leadership in the local ICE office will come with a renewed commitment to work cooperatively with state and local law enforcement. We also hope it will come with new resources, including the funding that Congress approved for state and local law enforcement through the Stonegarden program (but that remains stuck in a bureaucratic morass), and lifting of the hiring freeze your Department imposed for ICE in this state.”

The Governor is in Nogales today for the opening of the FAST (Free and Secure Trade) lanes at the Mariposa Port of Entry – a project that will facilitate legal commerce between Mexico and Arizona, while allowing enhanced enforcement of federal immigration law.

PAGE TWO

Sheriff Arpaio is available for interview. Please contact Lt. Paul Chagolla at MCSO, (602) 876-1818.

A copy of the letter to Secretary Chertoff is attached.

-30-

#